

## Message Text

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16-12

ACTION OC-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 EA-11 NEA-10 ADP-00 CCO-00 CAB-09

CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 EB-11 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01

FAA-00 L-03 RSR-01 /088 W

----- 111644

R 151455 Z JUN 73 ZDK

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4978

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 7041

BEIRUT FOR RCAA; BRUSSELS FOR FAA

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRN, IN

SUBJECT: AIR SAFETY IN INDIA

REF: A) BANGKOK 9243 (NOTAL); B) NEW DELHI 6636

BEGIN SUMMARY: QUESTION OF PROVIDING COURIER SERVICE TO NEW DELHI' S CONSTITUENT POSTS INVOLVES JUDGMENT ON SAFETY OF INDIAN AIRLINES. EMBASSY UNABLE OFFER TECHNICAL APPRAISAL, BUT FEELS DATA ON AIRLINE SAFETY RECORD ARE NEEDED. END SUMMARY.

1. IN REF A, BANGKOK REGIONAL COURIER OFFICE ASKS EMBASSY FOR RATINGS OF INDIAN AIRLINES PILOT COMPETENCE, AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE, NAVIGATIONAL EQUIPMENT, AND SAFETY PRACTICES AS EITHER ADEQUATE OR INADEQUATE. REQUEST FOLLOWS DIALOGUE AMONG THIS EMBASSY, BRDCO BANGKOK, AND DEPARTMENT ON WAYS OF PROVIDING COURIER SERVICE TO NEW DELHI' S CONSTITUENT POSTS WHEN RECENT EVENTS HAVE CAUSED POTENTIAL VOLUNTEER NON- PROFESSIONAL COURIERS AT

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THIS POST TO HAVE JUSTIFIABLE RESERVATIONS ABOUT FLYING INDIAN AIRLINES.

2. EMBASSY LACKS TECHNICAL EXPERTISE TO MAKE JUDGMENTS REQUESTED WITH ANY DEGREE OF CONFIDENCE AND WE ARE RELUCTANT TO APPROACH AIRLINE AND AVIATION AUTHORITIES AT THIS TIME WHEN INQUIRY INTO MAY 31 CRASH IS UNDER WAY. FOR WHAT IT IS WORTH, OUR IMPRESSION IS THAT IA

PILOTS ARE BY AND LARGE TECHNICALLY COMPETENT, BUT PERHAPS GIVEN TO COMPLACENCY. TWO- CAPTAIN SYSTEM USED IN IA 737' S MAY TEND TO DIMINISH RESPONSIBILITY WHICH EITHER PILOT FEELS HE ALONE MUST ASSUME. BOEING REPS TELL US MAINTENANCE OF 737' S IS FIRST RATE. SUCH NAVAIDS AS ARE AVAILABLE ARE SOMETIMES INOPERATIVE, BUT PILOTS ARE INFORMED, AND DECISION WHETHER OR NOT TO FLY UNDER GIVEN CONDITIONS

DEVOLVES ON AIRCRAFT COMMANDER. WE HAVE IMPRESSION PILOTS TEND TO STRETCH SAFETY LIMITS AND REGULATIONS OF THEIR OWN AIRLINE AND AVIATION

AUTHORITIES. PILOTS COMING INTO " HOME STATIONS", FOR EXAMPLE, ARE BELIEVED TO UNDERTAKE LANDINGS ON OCCASION UNDER WEATHER/ NAVAID CONDITIONS CLEARLY SHORT OF MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS. FURTHERMORE, PARTICULAR PROBLEM EXISTS AT DELHI AIRPORT WHERE POOR VISIBILITY AND NAVAID OUTAGES FREQUENTLY COMBINE TO DICTATE OVERFLIGHTS BY FOREIGN CARRIERS AND CANCELLATIONS OF DOMESTIC FLIGHTS. WE ARE UNABLE, HOWEVER, TO PUT SUCH INFORMATION IN CONTEXT WHICH WOULD ALLOW MEANINGFUL JUDGMENT ON OVERALL ADEQUACY OF AIRLINE.

3. AT THIS MOMENT, COURIER SERVICE TO CONSTITUENT POSTS IS MOST PRESSING OPERATIONAL QUESTION INVOLVING SUITABILITY OF INDIAN AIRLINES.

BUT AT ISSUE ALSO ARE BROADER QUESTIONS, INCLUDING EMBASSY POLICIES ON OFFICIAL TRAVEL, WHICH IN CIRCUMSTANCES ARE OF SUBSTANTIAL CONCERN TO PERSONNEL STATIONED HERE.

4. IN REF B WE ASKED IF THE DEPARTMENT OR OTHER WASHINGTON AGENCIES HAVE OR COULD COMPILE DATA ON INDIAN AIRLINES SAFETY RECORD. WE HAVE NOT RPT NOT RECEIVED ANY RESPONSE ON THIS QUERY AND NEED ONE PROMPTLY. THIS INFORMATION WOULD PROBABLY BE USEFUL TO BRDCO BANGKOK. IF THE DATA ARE NOT AVAILABLE, TECHNICALLY QUALIFIED USG AGENCIES MIGHT WISH TO CONSIDER AN INDEPENDENT STUDY OF THEIR OWN, DRAWING ON INFORMATION AVAILABLE FROM US AND CONFIDENTIAL

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FOREIGN CARRIERS, AND US MANUFACTURERS ( BOEING) WITH TIES HERE.

MOYNIHAN

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\*\*\* Current Handling Restrictions \*\*\* n/a

\*\*\* Current Classification \*\*\* CONFIDENTIAL

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**Subject:** AIR SAFETY IN INDIA  
**TAGS:** ETRN, IN, ETRN  
**To:** BANGKOK  
BEIRUT  
BOMBAY  
BRUSSELS  
CALCUTTA  
MADRAS  
OC

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